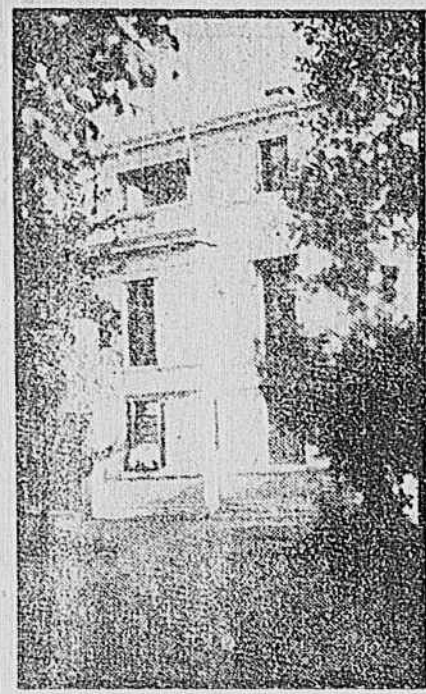


Educating the Greeks---All About Colleges and Gymnasiums of Modern Athenians---Institutions for Bootblacks and Newsboys



THE AMERICAN SCHOOL AT ATHENS.

BY FRANK G. CARPENTER.

Athens.

The shoes of America are now largely lacking by young Greeks. Every town of any size in our country has its Greek bootblack establishment, and the work is done by boys who are shipped there by contract and whose wages are sent back home to their parents. In talking with these little fellows, you will find them as bright as new dollars, and if you can speak Greek you will discover that almost all have had some education. Not a few have gone to school at the night schools at Athens and other Greek cities, and many have begun the study of the classics at home. Athens swarms with bootblacks and newsboys. They have come here from all over the country to earn their own living. I see them working at their books on the streets during their spare moments, and it is not an uncommon thing for a newsboy to practice the writing in a copybook while waiting for the papers to come from the press.

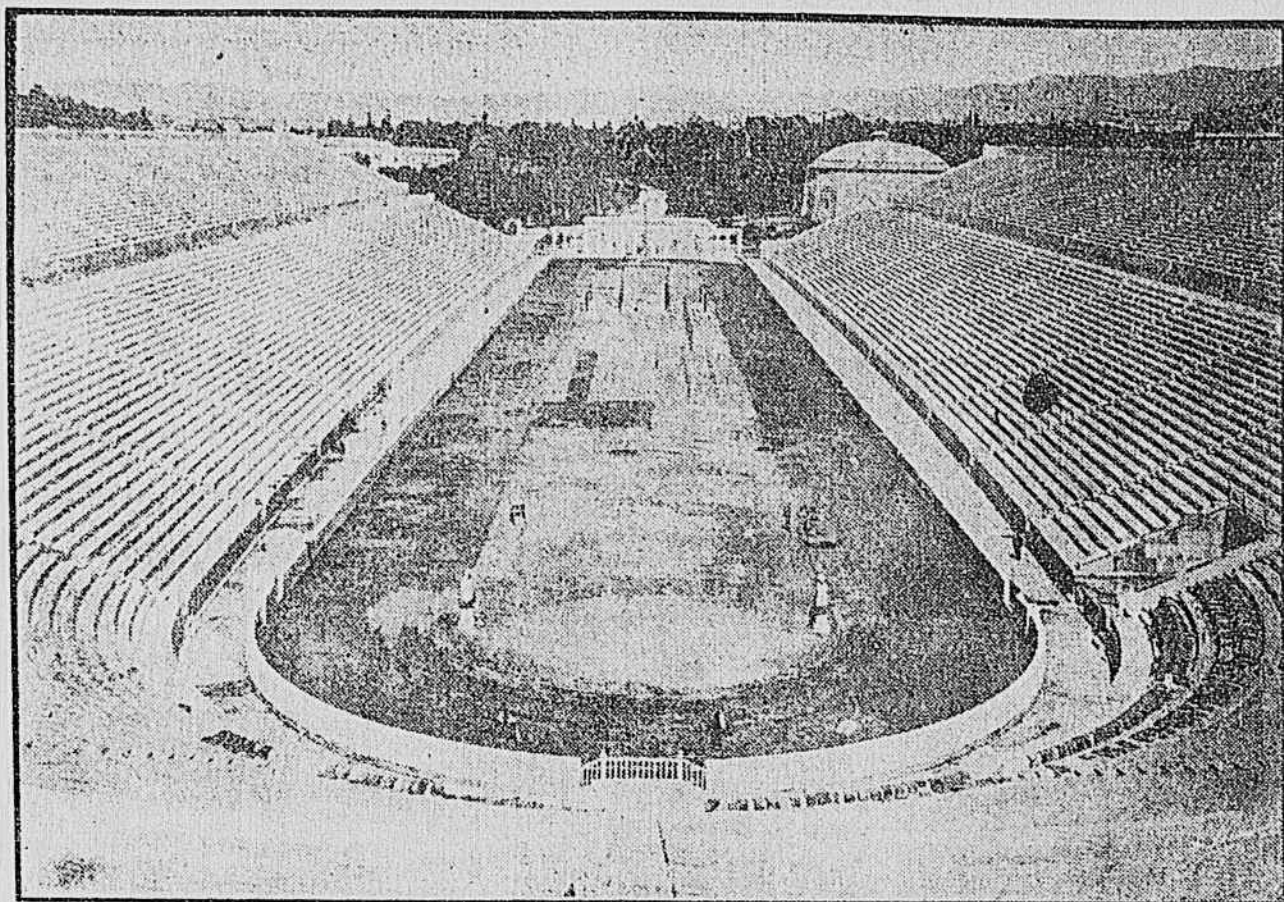
The Night School of Athens.

I venture there is no nation whose children are so anxious for an education as this, and none where the people are more ready to give it. There are three night schools for poor boys in Athens alone, with branch schools in other towns throughout Greece. I went to a school last night which held 300 boys ranging in ages from ten to fourteen, and I saw one class of 150 going through gymnastic exercises and drill on the street outside. They had an excellent director. They were straight, and well developed and they marched well, their shoulders thrown back.

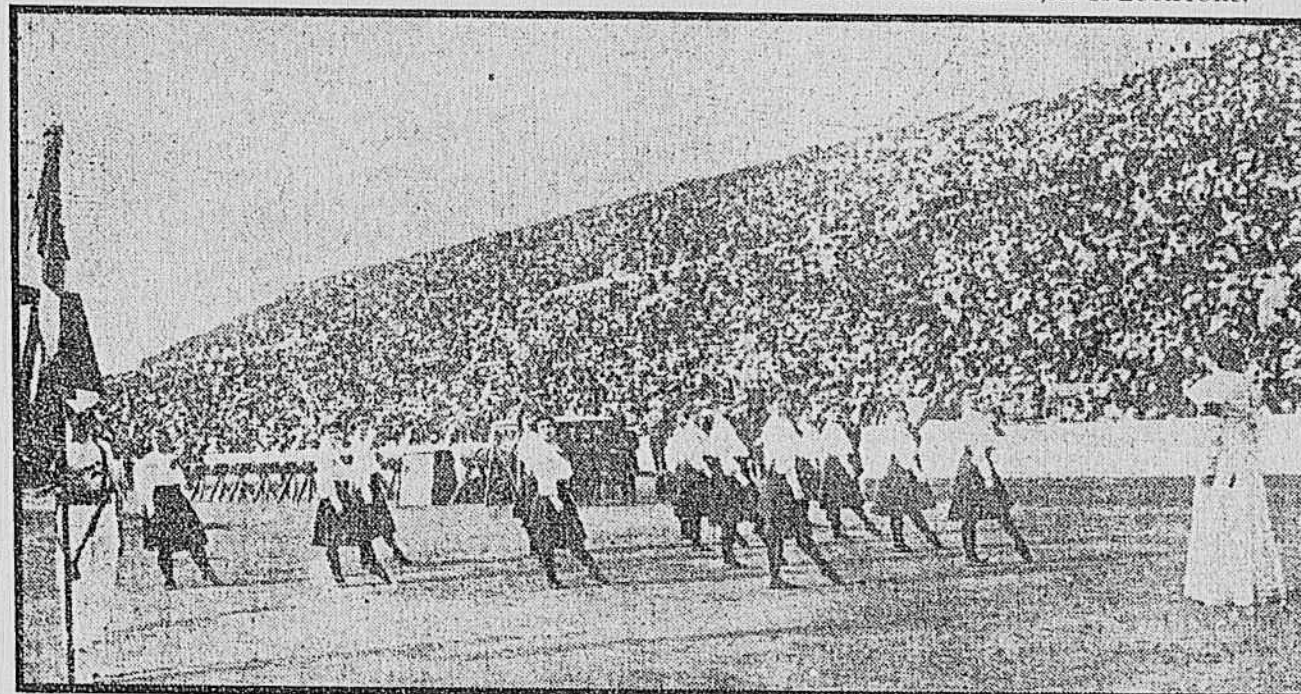
Entering the buildings, I was taken from room to room, finding each filled with thirty or forty boys as bright as any to be found in America. My guide was a director of the Greek National Bank, who devotes his evenings to this work. Each class stood up as we entered and they rose again as we left. In some rooms they were studying arithmetic, in others geography and in others history. They are all Greek. I was told that the school was attended by about 800 bootblacks each year.

Taught to Save Money.

These boys get an education at no cost to them except what they pay for their books. They are taught habits of thrift. The teachers have a savings



THE STADIUM AT ATHENS. AN ATHLETIC GROUNDS WHICH WILL SEAT 55,000 SPECTATORS.



GREEK COLLEGE GIRLS IN ATHLETICS. A SCENE IN THE STADIUM.

bank and each boy can deposit and have his own bank account. The other day one of them left for America, taking along 1,200 francs, or \$240, which he had saved in this way.

I was surprised at the teaching and the high class of some of the studies. The ordinary branches are the same as those of our graded schools, but in addition they read the classics and many of them can quote Homer and Demosthenes. There is a man of Greece. In every school room, and the children are instructed in Greek history and they follow the newspapers more closely than our boys at home.

The Greek Common School System.

The Greeks are now spending a great

deal on modern education. According to law all boys between the age of five and twelve must attend school, and there are now primary schools, secondary schools and colleges almost everywhere. There are altogether five or six thousand teachers, and the school children are numbered by the hundreds of thousands. There are private gymnasiums and commercial schools, normal schools and agricultural schools. There are trade schools at Athens and Patras run by the government, and there is a university here which has more than 2,500 students.

No Civil Service for Teachers.

One of the political jobs given out by the government is that of school teach-

ing. This is not governed by civil service rules, and a new set of instructors is usually brought in with each change of government. The schools of each district are looked upon as a kind of a political perquisite of the ministry and they are farmed out for votes.

Another objection lies in the school books, which are changed every year or so, new books being written. There are annual competitions for the writing of school books and the publication of such books is so profitable that there is talk of making the business a state monopoly, the government fixing the price of each book.

Teachers' Wages in Greece.

The salaries of the school teachers

are exceedingly low, while the requirements as to their education are high. The director of a primary school now receives about \$10 a month, and the director is a woman this sum is cut down to \$24. Women are not popular as school teachers, and the girl teacher loses social caste, as some of the Greeks look down upon ladies who must work for their bread. As the schools rise, the wages of teachers increase. Some receive \$40 and \$50 a month and the directors of the gymnasiums get from \$10 to \$20 a month. In the higher schools the expenses of study the tuition for the four-year course is only \$125, with the examination fee of \$50 for the legal and medical branches. A diploma costs \$10, and one can, outside his living expenses, go through college for a total of about \$150. I am told that the education in the higher schools is excellent, and that it compares favorably with that of our own academies and colleges.

Schools for Girls.

As to the education of the girls, it is not so general as that for boys. Only about one-sixth of the primary schools are girls' schools, and the number who frequent them is under 40,000. The girls do not, as a rule, go to school with the boys, and each sex has its own school house. There are some advanced schools for females. The best is the Arsakelion, the head of which is here at Athens, with branches at Patras, Larissa and Corfu. The Arsakelion is the Smith, Vassar, Wellesley or Bryn Mawr of Greece. It has altogether about 2,000 students, of whom 1,300 are in the branch here at Athens. This number includes, however, the kindergarten and day scholars as well as those of the college proper.

During my stay I have gone through this institution. It is a training college for teachers as well, and it has a three-year normal course. One of the compulsory studies is music, as are also sewing and housework. The courses are so varied that a girl may go in at six years and graduate at something like twenty, having received a complete education according to the Greek standard. I am surprised at the knowledge of the classics shown by these girls. They are taught ancient Greek, and they can read fluently Homer, Pindar and Xenophon. The older girls speak, read and write French, and not a few English.

As to the fees of the Arsakelion, they are low. Day scholars pay from \$1 to \$5 a month, and boarders only \$20 a month, which includes everything, rooms, meals and even the books.

I was taken through the school by the daughter of a directress, a beautiful girl of the Greek type.

Thirteen Hundred Greek Maidens.

I wish I could show you these 1,300 Grecian maidens whom I saw at this Vassar of Athens. The girls of this country are notably handsome, and those of the Arsakelion, coming out of the well-to-do classes of the people, would be esteemed fine-looking in any part of the world. They have fine forms, kept so by the compulsory gymnastics, rosy cheeks from the pure air of the Mediterranean, and features as classic as those of the ancient Greek statues. The girls speak a Greek which is more refined than the modern Greek heard on the streets. They read the classics at sight, and little ones of twelve and thirteen mouth Herodotus and Homer. Indeed, the way the modern Greek girl talks strikes every stranger as somewhat uncanny. It makes one think of the remark of the Parisian woman as to the precocity of the Parisian: "Why, in Paris, even the smallest children talk French."

The Hill School for Girls.

Another remarkable female school here at Athens was founded by an American missionary just about eighty years ago. This is the Hill school for girls, one of the most popular in Greece and now under government regulations. It contains about 200 pupils, of whom more than one-third are boarders. The ages range from six to seventeen, and the students come from different parts of the country. All are taught modern Greek, French and English, and also the regular studies of our schools at home. The school does not proselytize nor interfere with the religion of the pupils. It has a Greek Church connected with it, where a practical sermon is preached every Sunday.

An American Archeological School.

It will surprise many to know that some of our leading colleges have had an archeological school here for the past thirty years. Each of the colleges sends students to the school to spend a year in study and research concern-

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ing ancient Greece and Greek history. They make excavations, and search for relics of the past, where they dig over the ruins, finding statues, buildings and other relics of a time when Greece was at the height of its glory.

The colleges which support this school are Harvard, Yale, Brown, Amherst, Johns Hopkins, Columbia, the College of New Jersey, the College of the City of New York and Wesleyan, to which have been added Dartmouth, Cornell, and also the universities of Michigan, Pennsylvania, Virginia and California.

The Greeks Friendly to Americans.

This country has always been friendly to us, and Americans have been studying Greek here since our beginning as a nation. When Thomas Jefferson was President, Nicholas Biddle visited Greece, and there was an American named Howe who was surgeon-general of the Grecian fleet in the Greek War for independence. Henry M. Baird published a book on "Modern Greece" as far back as 1852, and Prof. Pelton of Harvard, another American, wrote a volume entitled "Greece, Ancient and Modern." Charles K. Tucker, who was our United States minister to Greece here in 1870, gave us a work on "The Greeks of To-day," and Bayard Taylor and others have described the country.

What the Americans are Doing.

During my stay here I have called at the American school. It is now carried on in a building belonging to the institution, situated beyond the King's palace on the slope of the hill, facing Mount Hymettus. The house cost about \$10,000 and is surrounded by a beautiful garden. Entering a large hall, steps of pentelic marble lead by easy flight to the second floor, where are the library of the school and the offices of the director. The library is one of the best equipped private ones of the kind in Athens, and it has, I should say, about 2,000 volumes. The present director of the school, Mr. Hill, is a graduate of the University of Vermont, and later on of Columbia, and he has with him eight other professors, who represent Dartmouth, Johns Hopkins, Harvard, Princeton, Columbia, and some other colleges. There is one woman among the graduate students, a Miss Stone, who is making a specialty of the topography of ancient Greece, and who has traveled extensively throughout the interior.

The director of the school tells me that its allowance is not sufficient to carry on a great archeological work. It has something like 2,000 a year, and with this it is trying to excavate old Athens, which, when in its prime, held half a million, and was the largest city of Greece. The Americans have been working there for more than ten years. After visiting the site I hope to describe what they have done.

In addition to the American school, a number of other nations have similar institutions. The French are spending eight or ten times as much as we are, and their archeologists have laid out over \$160,000 in their work at Delphi. The Germans have an archeological institute which has spent \$200,000 in digging up old Olympia, and the Austrians and Russians have recently entered this field.

Modern Athletics in Greece.

All the schools here are teaching athletics. They have their gymnastic exercises daily, and this is so of those for both girls and boys. The students are required to take long walks, and every school must have a gymnasium, which is maintained at the cost of the state. All the schools near the sea teach swimming, and it is required that the intermediate schools practice rowing and shooting. During the last weeks of every Lent gymnastic competitions are held all over Greece, and the old sports are being revived. A school of gymnastics has been founded in Athens to teach the training masters of the various institutions, and female teachers are obliged to learn all about athletics.

Athens has two gymnastic clubs, one of which has a gymnasium to which any one can be admitted on the payment of 20 cents a month, and there is a special section for girls, who practice the Swedish movements under the direction of a committee of women. There are forty or more other clubs scattered over Greece, some of which are subsidized by the government, and every now and then games are held in the great new stadium which has been erected by an Egyptian Greek named Averof.

Athens Great Athletic Field.

This structure is one of the finest athletic grounds of the world. I went

out to see it this afternoon. It is situated between Mount Lycabettos and the Acropolis, on the very site where was the great stadium of the past. It is of the same size and probably of the same character. Imagine a marble amphitheatre which will seat 55,000 spectators and has an arena 600 feet long. The marble seats rise up the sides of a natural amphitheatre made by the hills, and over it shines the blue sky of Greece. The arena itself is of the shape of a great horseshoe, with long ends. It is covered with black sand, and this forms a striking contrast to the silver white of the marble. It was here that the Olympic games of some years ago were held, and here will be held some of those of the future.

A Talk With the Grand Chamberlain.

The Grand Prince of Greece is at the head of national athletic matters. He is absent from Athens at this writing, but I have had a talk with his grand chamberlain, Count Mercati, as to what this country expects to do in the Olympic games of the future. He tells me that the government is rather hard up for money, but that it is anxious to one of the great international athletic contests of the near future held here. Said he: "Our people are liberal and without prejudice, and some of the nations of the world are more sure of having a square deal at Athens than elsewhere else. This is especially so of the Americans, who justly maintain that they were unfairly treated in London."

I asked as to the accommodations and as to whether Athens could take care of the crowd that would come to such a competition.

Count Mercati replied:

"At our last Olympic games we used the exhibition hall in the palace grounds, almost all sorts of wrestling. We are not the equals of the nations of the past, and we have not their harmonious physical development nor their staying powers. On short runs we are defeated by the athletes of some other nations. You must remember that we are not old as an independent government, and that for 400 years or more we were under the rule of the Turks, who frowned on all physical exercises and prohibited every student at the end of two years after admission undergo a physical examination, and if he cannot show evidences of his muscular training he must remain where he is. I do not think that the care in any college of other countries."

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Weldon Social News

[Special to The Times-Dispatch.]

Weldon, N. C., March 18.—Mrs. Mary V. Scott and Miss Mary P. Scott, of Petersburg, are the guests of Mr. and Mrs. W. L. Scott, in South Washington Avenue.

Mrs. W. T. Parker is visiting relatives in Norfolk.

Mrs. J. E. Green has returned home from a visit to New York and Washington city.

Mrs. Ida V. Stalnack spent the week with friends in Mecklenburg county, Va.

Miss Mary Coleman, of Gloucester county, Va., who has been here to visit the family of Mrs. T. F. Anderson, has returned home.

Mrs. J. L. Howell, of Richmond, was the guest this week of Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Tilghman.

Mrs. J. M. Sliger, of Philadelphia, is spending some time here with her grandmother, Mrs. A. E. Green.

Judge James M. Mullen, of the Petersburg Corporation Court, was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Daniel one day this week.

The Book Club met with Mrs. J. L. Shepherd in South Weldon, Tuesday afternoon. The handsome home, with its open fires and beautiful decorations of parma violets and ferns, presented an attractive picture. Soon after their arrival members of the club were conducted into the dining-room, where delicious punch was served by Mrs. W. L. Scott. The subject for study was "Shelly," and some splendid papers were presented by Mesdames O. W. Pierce, W. R. Smith and W. J. Ward. At the conclusion of the program the hostess served delicious refreshments.

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